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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National food program feeding Georgia's hungry children this summer

Program provides free meals to eligible children in low-income areas

ATLANTA, Ga., (May 30, 2012) – School's out in many Georgia counties and that means Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors across the state are preparing to serve nutritious meals to school age children while they're away from their regular school environment where they would normally receive free breakfast and/or lunch.

The SFSP "Simplified Program" is administered by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning and is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). A similar program, SFSP Seamless, is administered by the Georgia Department of Education and allows schools already on the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to move seamlessly to the summer program. Sponsors of the SFSP Simplified Program include churches, non-profits and city and county governments.

"This program steps in to assist children who would normally receive free and reduced price meals during the school year," explained DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle. Lou Brienza, director of Nutrition Services for DECAL, said, "This summer, we are proud to once again have nearly 100 sponsors throughout the state serving meals. More than 3-million meals were served through the SFSP during the summer of 2011 thanks to the great efforts of 103 sponsors serving nutritious meals at 1614 sites."

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DECAL reimbursed SFSP sponsors more than \$8-million in federal funds to conduct the program. Eligible and qualified sponsors receive training on the program, its application and budget processes, including how to correctly set up and operate a successful and compliant SFSP. They also receive technical assistance from DECAL upon request.

For more information on SFSP meals being served in your area that are “Open Feeding Sites” available to all school age children, please visit the DECAL Web site at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Nutrition/Search.aspx> or www.summerfood.usda.gov or call 855-550-SFSP (7377).

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About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.

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